



RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING CHALLENGE: COACHING

ABOUT COACHING

When a parent uses coaching strategies, they send the message that they are confident that their child can think through their own challenges and make positive choices. They do not solve the problem for the child but instead, ask good questions, listen carefully, and reflect—and at times, challenge their children to produce their own wise choices.

CAUTION

If your child's problem relates to a friendship or a subject in school, these can be ideal coaching opportunities. The challenge needs to be an open opportunity for your child to try out his/her solution. If you have a specific outcome that you need to promote because there's a safety issue at stake, then it is not a good issue to use coaching.

PARENT PRACTICE

You can use the coaching process as a small group to practice the strategy using your own challenges. Allow 30 minutes for this activity. Then, find a chance to try this tool with your children.

COACHING PROCESS

1. **Designate...** a person who will offer the challenge and also, the person who will serve as a coach. Make sure each are seated in a way that others can observe. You may also want to designate a timekeeper. (2 min.)
2. **Describe a challenge...** parent offer a particular parenting challenge that is troubling them. (10 min.)
3. **Listen deeply and in silence...** coach offers full attention to the speaker who is voicing the challenge. Coach may want to take notes. Coach needs to suspend own voice of judgment and open mind and heart while listening. Be sure and listen for feelings and thoughts. Empathy is a key skill here.
4. **Pause and breathe.** Yes, this might feel awkward but don't skip this step! This will offer you full brain to the task and help you access greater wisdom. (1 min.)
5. **Reflect back...** Coach reflects back to the parent the challenge articulated. Be sure and include feeling words (even if feelings were unspoken but felt). (2 min.)
6. **Ask open-ended questions to prompt thinking...** What are some ideas for steps you could take even if small to make things better? How do you think others might feel if you do that? How will your problem look in a couple of weeks if you take that step? The questions about anticipating the future and how it will look after your child makes a choice is critical in promoting consequential thinking. (5 min.)



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- 7. Challenge...** If your child is clearly limiting their options, challenge them to get creative. Ask, how else might you approach this problem? Who might help support you? How will your idea promote your relationship(s)? Are there any ways you could create a win-win situation where each person involved gets something they want or hope for? (3 min.)
- 8. Summarize and Set a Positive Goal...** Summarize your discussion - their problem including feelings about the problem, their ideas for solving it, and then frame the solution in terms of a goal. If their solution is a big idea or a long-term strategy, think together about one small next step they can take this week toward that goal. (2 min.)

Nice work, Coach and Challenger!

REFLECT (5 min.)

- How did the process feel for each of the participants?
- How can you imagine using this with your children?
- What circumstances might benefit most from this kind of coaching?